

**Meeting Minutes of
The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health
1:00 P.M., Tuesday, January 9, 2007**

The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health met at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 9, 2007, in Barry Hall's Conference Room 126, 14 Harrington Road, Cranston, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Richard Leclerc, Chair; Linda Bryan; Sandra DelSesto; Scotti DiDanato; Elizabeth Earls; Jennifer McCarthy for Chaz Gross; Mitch Henderson; Joseph Le; Reed Cosper; Representative Bruce Long; Natalie Serpa; and Noreen Shawcross.

Ex-Officio: Craig Stenning and Gene Nadeua, MHRH; Jeanne Smith and Sandy Woods, DCYF;
Members Present: Fred Friedman, Department of Corrections; Laura Jones, Department of Health; and Mary Ann Ciano, Department of Elderly Affairs.

Staff: Charles Williams, Kristen Quinlan, and Mary Ann Nassa.

Once a quorum was established, the Chair, Richard Leclerc, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. After introductions were conducted, Richard entertained a motion to accept the Minutes of December 14, 2006. Liz Earls motioned to accept the minutes and Scotti DiDanato seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the minutes were approved as submitted.

UPDATES FROM MHRH

Craig Stenning reported that today at 2 p.m. there would be a hearing before the House Finance Committee with one of the subjects being the current treatment capacity in the area of Substance Abuse. Craig stated that he anticipates their focus will be on the current residential capacity. Craig reported that currently there is capacity of approximately 300 residential substance abuse beds in the State, and they are at 97.3 percent capacity. The crossover discussion is between that capacity and the ability of the Department of Corrections (DOC) to reduce their ever-increasing census because of the major pressures caused by the budget. Craig senses that a substantial part of the problem is not so much treatment, as it is housing, leading to discussions around increasing sober housing, conditional housing and any kind of housing that would assist individuals with getting out of the Adult Correctional Institution (ACI). Craig described two different populations that are the pressure points: 1.) Individuals who are nearing the end of their sentences and need treatment prior to being allowed to leave, and 2.) A much higher number of individuals who are out on probation and parole and get violated for any number of reasons. Craig stated his proposed discussions would be around ways to increase outpatient capacity to handle more individuals from that system. Craig reported that the outpatient numbers are at current capacity of approximately 2,200 individuals in general outpatient and another 405 individuals in intensive outpatient or day and partial hospitalization. The outpatient system today is at 104.1 percent capacity with some room in the intensive outpatient and partial hospitalization areas. The length-of-stays in those systems are less in state funded slots than they are in either Medicaid or private insurance.

Craig announced that at an open meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2007, at 3 p.m. at the Regan Conference Center on the John O. Pastore Complex, Director Nelson would be kicking off the first of three workgroups that she has discussed as part of her quality assessment review. This will be the Innovations Workgroup, which deals with a variety of different initiatives to modify and improve the system within all three of the Divisions: Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Healthcare Services, and Eleanor Slater Hospital. Craig reported the discussions will cover some initiatives to provide some level of a managed benefit for individuals with disabilities.

Craig reported that the Governor has, by statute, until the end of the month to release his budget. He stated that the revenue figures continue to change creating a difficult task in achieving their target proposals.

Craig reported that the Division of Purchasing has issued a tentative letter of award for the combined purchase of psychiatric inpatient services and substance abuse detoxification services to SSTAR. The contract is in the process of negotiations. Craig stated that it is considered tentative until there is a contract that both sides agree to. Craig has assigned the original review team for that RFP to engage in conversations with interested parties to make sure that any concerns that people may have are considered in the written terms and conditions of that contract. Meetings with the RI Council of CMHCs and DATA are planned, and a meeting has already been scheduled with the medical directors of the mental health centers along with some other individuals who have expressed interest.

Sandy Woods asked about increasing capacity in substance abuse slots and if that increase would be dedicated to DOC.

Craig stated that he has been asked to engage in conversations with the DOC to determine if there were dollars that could be identified for some type of program that would benefit DOC.

UPDATES FROM DCYF

Janet Anderson spoke about a press conference held earlier for the Kids Link Rhode Island, which is the new Emergency Services network for children in Rhode Island, and distributed an informational flyer. Janet explained that Gateway is the lead agency contracted to navigate this program along with all eight of the community mental health centers. The program will provide a 24/7 hot line for children and families in the State of Rhode Island. Janet stated that a child-competent clinician is available by telephone when a family calls in and within two hours, if need be, a live individual could meet with them wherever they would like to have the meeting to perform an evaluation assessment and referral triage connection with the appropriate services that are needed for that child and family. If the child needs hospitalization, the referral can occur; but the hope is that there will be much less need for hospitalization with this network.

Janet stated that in terms of budget issues, DCYF has submitted a budget, but it is in the process of being reviewed. Some pieces have been accepted and others are being negotiated. Janet stated that DCYF's piece of the total State's deficit going into 2008 is approximately 30 million dollars, and the reality is that the State of Rhode Island is in a huge deficit. The Emergency Services network that has been rolled out is one of the positive changes that DCYF is hoping will have an affect on the budget. It is intended to improve access to the appropriate level of services for children, creating less boarder kids in the hospitals and fewer kids going into psychiatric hospitals; or when they are admitted, they will be in for a shorter stay and those who truly need the psychiatric hospital will have those hospital stays available to them along with a better level of step down. Janet stated that facing this size of the deficit going into 2008, DCYF is looking across the board at their mission of the department to determine needs to continue given their statutory responsibilities and what needs to discontinue. She stated that one of the things to be aware of is that DCYF is looking at limiting the age of the population of children served. Presently, if a child is in DCYF custody or care at age 18, they continue to serve that individual until they are 21. They are proposing to discontinue services after age 18 and transfer services to MHRH and asking if they do this, how will it affect MHRH and Adult Corrections. Janet stated that DCYF is

attempting to reform the system that will improve access to services and quality of services, but with a limited amount of money.

Janet reported that DCYF is presently operating with no Chief Financial Officer (CFO); and during this time prior to getting the official CFO, a team appointed by the Governor is working with them reviewing the management structure, funding, billing, etc. to potentially save money. DCYF is reviewing how they purchase services for children and families, along with models in other states, and their community-based front-end services. Janet stated that they are setting up focus groups to meet with community providers and families to get feedback for a concept paper that they are developing in order to redesign and better deploy the present funds to meet the needs of the children and families in Rhode Island. The question is how do they take the strength that they have developed, build on those strengths, and create standards across the State that all communities meet in terms of accessibility, quality of care and the provision of a family-driven service system. Janet stated that she would share the concept paper with the Council when it is completed.

Janet reported on the Children's Shelter Initiative which is a transitional process for children who in shelters and become known to the DCYF system. This initiative works with community providers to assess the child and the family's needs and move the child out of the shelter system and out of DCYF's care as quickly and safely as possible. Janet stated that it is being piloted in the Woonsocket area building on the Woonsocket Initiative. If it is successful they would like to implement it statewide in four regions. Janet stated that evaluation and family assessment provides a continuum of safety.

In response to Joseph Le's concerns regarding translation of information to the Southeast Asian populations, Janet stated that the information regarding Emergency Services would be displayed at bus stops. Janet stated that there are such a large number of different languages spoken within the community that it might be better to do it in English because most people understand at least some English.

Janet stated that DCYF has not had any layoffs; however, the number of FTE's is limited to 796. Last year there were approximately 840, and DCYF is not being allowed to fill those positions.

Laura Jones of the Department of Health asked how many children are in the category that DCYF wants to drop between the ages of 18 and 21. Janet did not have that number, but would bring that number to the Council at the next meeting. Laura feels concerned about the changes within DCYF that would affect this population. Janet stated that the Partnership for Youth and Transition, which specifically looks at this age population is composed of a group of State agency representatives as well as community members and families. They have been meeting over the past year to review the policies within the State to help this age group successfully transition into adulthood.

Janet state Colleen Carone who is the Chief of Evaluation and Data has started collecting data for DCYF that has not previously been available. One of the things revealed through her data is that DCYF has actually had a 10 percent increase in its population from 2005 to 2006.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Kristen Quinlan reported that the anticipated funding from the Rhode Island Foundation to assist in the Strategic Plan for the Division was declined. Kristen reported that she would be meeting with Charles Williams and Corinna Roy next week to redirect the planning efforts.

Richard Leclerc stated that at some point the Council needs to look at what efforts can be made in the strategic plan with different resources than first anticipated. Richard stated that since the Department of MHRH has its own plan that it is presently rolling out and other initiatives around the State, Richard feels that it is important that the Council influence some of the planning by looking at what some of the strategic visions should be for adults with severe and persistent mental illness and for children with severe emotional disorders.

Noreen Shawcross reported that the Competitive Negotiation was issued for the Apartment Program that will replace the Welcome Arnold Shelter. She reported that the pre-bid meeting was held yesterday and that the applications are due by 2 p.m. on Friday, January 12, 2007. Noreen reported that they will be interviewing applicants early next week and making a decision on January 18, 2007. Noreen also stated that major concerns appear to be around issues relating to women who are crack addicts with children in DCYF care. Noreen stated that use of drugs on the apartment premises would be reason for discharge back into a congregate shelter and most of those existing shelters other than Welcome Arnold do not welcome this particular group of women, creating one remaining challenge that has not been worked out yet.

Richard Leclerc asked Noreen to address the Rhode Island Housing RFP. Noreen stated that Rhode Island Housing has been providing the funding to operating a state rental subsidy program. When looking over the long term, they identified that the same folks remain in that housing for a number of years because their income has not increased enough to get out and afford market-grade housing. Rhode Island Housing is looking for a program that has more movement by helping individuals move forward, they have radically changed their housing subsidy program. The new program is called The Road Home. They are working to move individuals out of the existing housing into other units in the community. They are working one-on-one and no will be displaced from the program. They plan to have openings for individuals who require permanent supportive housing and are targeting people who have been homeless for this housing. Noreen referred specific questions to the RFP which can be viewed at www.purchasing.ri.gov website.

Charles Williams stated that Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has announced the availability of funding for targeted capacity expansion grants for substance abuse treatment and HIV Aids services. Charles reported that they intend to fund 65 grants around the nation, with actual awards being about \$500,000 per year for treatment services and \$400,000 per year for outreach and pre-treatment services with the grants running up to five years. Charles stated that eligible applicants are non-profits, state and local governments, federally recognized American Indian and Alaskan native tribes, and urban Indian organizations, and universities and colleges; and the application deadline is February 20, 2007.

Fred Friedman described the existing problem at the Department of Corrections (DOC). Fred stated that five years ago the census was approximate 3,400 to 3,500, and about 2.5 years ago it peaked to 3,600, then it dropped to about 3,400 and currently it is at 3,800 people who have been remanded to the custody and care of the State of Rhode Island. Fred stated that this has created a push to see if there is a better way of treating people than sending them to the most restrictive environment. Fred stated Director Wall is meeting with Representative Costantino and the Finance Committee regarding alternatives to incarceration. Fred reported that on any given day there are between 35 to 50 people who have been released on parole but are still incarcerated because there are no substance abuse residential treatment beds available. In addition, Fred stated that every month DOC receives three or four individuals who have been remanded to Corrections pending availability of a substance abuse treatment

bed in the community. Last year there were over 18,000 admissions to DOC, and 2,000 of those admissions were for 90 days or less, 600 of those admissions were for 30 days or less. Fred stated that those kinds of sentences are usually not major public safety threats and are more likely a substance abuse related issue. Fred stressed how expensive this kind of sentence is to the Department of Corrections to treat these individuals. DOC needs to incarcerate individuals who represent a threat to the public and who really need to be incarcerated rather than those who could be treated in a different environment.

Richard Leclerc reviewed the tentative agenda for the future and stated that one of the items that is scheduled for next month is the report on the regional substance abuse providers assuming that the report is completed by then. Richard reported that John Young has requested to present the development of the State's Plan to provide managed care services to adults who are Medicaid recipients. It is a voluntary program and a public meeting was held about a week ago. The expectation is that it will be rolled out at the latest by July 2007, with one part that may be rolled out earlier. John is eager to notify a number of groups about these developments. Richard stated that he is anticipating John's presentation at the March meeting depending on his availability.

Janet Anderson suggested that a future meeting should include a presentation and update on the Positive Educational Partnership at DCYF.

Reed Cospers suggested that there be future conversations about how to better serve as the State's planning board for Behavioral Health Services. Richard stated that one of the roles of the Governor's Council is to advocate for and to promote a better system of care, in order to do that, he suggested, we need to share information. Reed also suggested an interchangeable e-mail group connection be formed. Charles Williams stated that he would check with the IT department to see if that is possible.

Mitch Henderson suggested that maybe the council could have a discussion once a year regarding data fit into a score card. Richard stated that at another level it would be important to select key benchmarks for discussion that shows how things have progressed as a system. Richard suggested indicators be e-mailed to Kristen Quinlan at kquinlan@mhrh.ri.gov in order to narrow it down to a manageable few. Charles Williams stated that an initial sort could be done to separate those indicators there are data and those indicators where there may not be data and those indicators where it would take forever to find data.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

There was no further business. Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **Thursday, February 15, at 8:30 a.m. in the first floor Conference Room 126 at the Barry Hall Building.**

Minutes respectfully recorded and written by:

Mary Ann Nassa
Secretary, Governor's Council on Behavioral Health